

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE  
Transcriber's Office

February 27, 1998 LB 1112, 1354

don't even know if it's a dromedary, might be a Bactrian, two humps. Anyway, I urge you to support mental health, and the way to do it, I believe, is LB 1354, which was introduced by Senator Wesely and which he referred to in his remarks.

SPEAKER KRISTENSEN: One minute.

SENATOR TYSON: This is very, very serious business. And as Senator Landis said, there are going to be some savings generated. One of the savings that we're going to generate, if we have a good, widely supported, comprehensive mental health plan is we're going to lessen some of the numbers that are in our prisons and in our jails, because we have people now serving sentences in confinement that shouldn't be in jail, they should be in a hospital, and this is true across the country. People have...there are states that have prison wards that are nothing more than psychiatric wards. We have this here in this state, people who have been convicted, and what they are doing is responding to mental aberration, not to some desire to commit a crime. I'm going to ask that everyone,...

SPEAKER KRISTENSEN: Time.

SENATOR TYSON: ...when they come to vote for this, vote to suppress it. Thank you.

SPEAKER KRISTENSEN: Senator Dwite Pedersen.

SENATOR DW. PEDERSEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the Legislature. I know it's getting about lunch time, but I need to speak on this bill. As most of you know, I am a substance abuse counselor. I've worked in this field for 15 years. We used to take people into treatment for substance abuse for 30, 60, 90 days inpatient treatment. We are now down to most of our coverage being somewhere in the neighborhood of 3 to 7 days for inpatient, and most of that is referred to outpatient treatment. And in outpatient treatment, after the deductible, the cost is still so high that a lot of people do not get treatment, they can't afford the deductible plus the self-paid part of what they need for this, for substance abuse alone. Plus, most of your substance abuse has to be done by a psychologist, master degree level at the minimum, or a Ph.D.